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Ch'iang

III. Economic Life.

1. Communications, Roads, and Bridges.

Among the Ch'iang there are no telephones, radios, or telegraph lines. There are no newspapers, and no books excepting those written by the Chinese and possessed by the few who can read them. Chinese-built roads connect the cities and towns in the valleys. Even here no wheeled vehicles can be used—only "hwagers" and sedan chairs, riding horses, and pack animals. On the Chinese roads some carry loads on the ends of bien dan or poles, but many carry their loads on their backs. Between the Ch'iang homes and villages the roads are unpaved footpaths, very narrow and often very steep. Frequently they go over or along the sides of steep precipices. It is not strange that the Ch'iang generally walk and always carry their loads on their backs. News is passed along by word of mouth, and naturally it is sometimes inaccurate. [203]

The bridges resemble those of the Chinese and of their various neighbors in this region. A small creek may be waded, or crossed by stepping on large stones. Some bridges are merely logs or boards laid across the streams. One type of bridge is the false or corbelled arch. From both sides large timbers reach out one beyond the other, until they meet above the middle of the stream. A bridge often consists of a single bamboo cable. Two hollow wooden half-cylinders are tied securely around the cable. The person or baggage is tied to this, and when released slides half way across. Then the person pulls himself hand over hand the rest of the way, or the baggage is pulled to the opposite shore by means of a small rope. The larger rope bridges have nine or ten bamboo cables underfoot on which boards are laid, and four or more cables on each side. The longest bridges have several wooden trestles, the bridge sagging down between. As one walks over, the whole bridge shakes.

The rivers are too rapid for boats, which between Mou Chow and Yin Shiu Wan 秀湾 and between Wei Chow and Tsugulow are not even used as ferries.

2. Money, Marketing, Bartering, and Borrowing.

Chinese money is the currency of the Ch'iang. Until the latter part of the Manchu dynasty it was silver ingots or lump silver, then it was silver dollars. Now it is Chinese bank bills.

There is some buying and selling in the small villages. This is